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SACRAMENTO WOMAN INDICTED FOR
THEFT OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY

SACRAMENTO -- United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury returned a one count indictment charging BEVERLY BENFORD, of Sacramento, with theft of government property .

This case is the product of an investigation by the United States Department of Agriculture.

According to Assistant United States Attorney R. Steven Lapham , who is prosecuting the case, the indictment alleges that BENFORD misappropriated federal funds while an employee at the University of California, Davis. The funds came from the \$13.3 million annual Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program, half of which is federally funded, that BENFORD administered. BENFORD is alleged to have made fraudulent purchases and travel expense claims over a period of at least six years, going back to at least July, 2000.

The misappropriation of funds was initially reported to University of California, Davis officials in August, 2006, as a whistleblower complaint. When a campus investigation found that United States Department of Agriculture funds were possibly involved, university officials reported their findings to the federal government. BENFORD has resigned her position in the

University of California, Davis Department of Nutrition and is no longer employed by the University. "The campus is very concerned about this alleged fraud and will continue to cooperate fully with the federal investigators," said Robert Loessberg-Zahl, Assistant Executive Vice Chancellor at the University of California, Davis. "We also are continuing our internal investigation, and working to assure that procedures are in place to prevent any such incident in the future."

The maximum statutory penalty for a violation of Section 641 is ten years, a fine of \$250,000, and a three year term of supervised release. However, the actual sentence will be dictated by the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of factors, and will be imposed at the discretion of the court.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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